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THE KARAITE LITERARY OPPONENTS OF SAADIAH GAON IN THE FOURTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

37¹. Israel [b. Samuel?] ha-Dajjan (also called ha-Ma'arabi) lived in Cairo at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and is the author of several works in Arabic². I have made the conjecture above (No. 26), that the poems preserved at the top of a MS. of David b. Abraham's Lexicon, and which are aimed against Saadiah and Samuel b. Hofni, were perhaps composed, not by Israel b. Daniel, but by our Israel ha-Ma'arabi.

38. The MS. of the British Museum, Or. 2498 (Cat., I, no. 334) contains an Arabic commentary on Deuteronomy, the beginning of which is missing, and which originally extended perhaps over the whole Pentateuch. This commentary, as the colophon states, is compiled from Qirqi-sâni, Jefet b. 'Ali, Sahl b. Maṣliḥ [Abu-l-Surri], Abu-l-

¹ The numbers are continued from vol. XVIII, pp. 209-50, from vol. XIX, pp. 59-83, and from vol. XX, pp. 74-85.

² Enumerated in Steinschneider, *Arab. Liter. d. Juden*, § 184. The name of his father Samuel only rests upon a combination of Pinsker (p. 176) that has yet to be confirmed. On the other hand, the Karaite authors call him only רבי ישראל דרין or דמסרי; e.g., his pupil, Jefet b. Ṣagīr (in Pinsker, *ibid.*); Aaron b. Elias (*Gan Eden*, f. 22 b; *Keter Tora* on Exod. xii. 2, f. 28 a); Samuel al-Magribi (*Murshid*, Section vii, chap. xiii, ed. Lorge, p. 14); Ibn al-Hiti (*J. Q. R.*, IX, 435, l. 8 from bottom); Elias Bashiatchi (*Adderet*, עין קה"ה, cap. XL); Moses Bashiatchi (in ספר עיריה, see Steinschneider, *Cat. Lugd.*, p. 12); Judah Meir Taurizi (in Pinsker, p. 144), and Simḥa Isaac Lutzki (ארה צדיקים, f. 21 b, l. 22).—In the Arabic compilation on Deuteronomy about to be mentioned, the author cited as ר' יש [= ישראל] פי אלר' עלי אלר [= גלריום] צאחב אלעיריה (*see* Margoliouth, *Catalogue*, I, p. 268 b) must likewise be our Israel.

Faraj Harûn, Abu-l-Faraj Furqân b. 'Asad [i. e. Jeshua b. Jehuda], and others, of whom Jefet seems to have been used the most, and it was finished in the first ten days of the month Nisan, 1663 (Era of Contracts) or the end of Muharram, 752, of the Hegira (= March, 1351)¹. On xvii. 8 (fol. 49 a) a vigorous controversy is waged against Saadiah, who (according to the precedent of the Talmudists) refers the words *בין דם לדם* to the difference between pure and impure blood (*והבאעה אן קו' חע' בין דם לדם*) הוא דם נרות ודם זיבות והוא ידל' עלי פסאד מזהבהם ועדם עקלהם (ודינהם פהל יכון נקל אקבה מן הוא אלך). As mentioned already (cf. above, vol. XVIII, p. 228), David b. Boaz (?) also controverted this explanation of Saadiah, and it is therefore possible that he was the source whence our compiler drew.

39. Aaron b. Elias, or Aaron the Younger, is also important as a Bible exegete, a teacher of the Law, and a religious philosopher, on which account his co-religionists place him by the side of Maimonides. His place of origin was Nikomedia, in Asia Minor, and he died 1369². For our purpose we have first to consider his Book of Precepts, entitled *גן ערן* (composed 1354, ed. Koslow, 1866). Here also Saadiah is the subject of rather frequent controversy. Aaron deals most fully with the subject of the calendar, and is uncommonly incensed against Saadiah's theory of the great age of the permanent calendar with all its rules. He says that Saadiah, in this assertion, scoffs at his own teachers, the Talmudists, who all firmly maintained the method of observation (fol. 5 b: *מכלל האיש ר' סעריא החל: ר' יהושע ור' רבננו היו מתנהגים בראיית הירח כרבן גמליאל ור' יהושע ור' (עקיבא וחבריהם ואמר שהם תפשו דת שלא כדון תורה וכו')*), then

¹ Cf. my *About-Faradj Haroun ben al-Faradj*, p. 37 (= R. E. J., XXXIII, 216). That Jefet was the principal source follows from the remark on Deut. xxxiii. 4 (published in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Dr. Kohut*, p. 436, n. 3). See also Margoliouth, *Catalogue*, I. c., and Steinschneider, *Arab. Liter. d. Juden*, §§ 132, 235 (also my *Zur jüd.-arab. Litter.*, p. 79).

² Cf. on him finally *Jew. Encycl.*, s.v. (I, 9, 10), and *אוצר ישראל*, s.v.

advances his arguments and objections against observation (ואלו הם פוגותיו וקושיותיו ושבושיו), altogether ten in number), and refutes it. Then Aaron opposes Saadiah's assertion that all the data in the Talmud from which it is inferred the *Dehijot* had no validity, are to be understood only theoretically (fol. 6 d: ... והואיל והביאו זה מצד המעשה בטלו: fol. 6 d: (דברי הפיתומי שאמר כי כל מקום שיאמרו חל טעמו ע"ד רריפה וכו'). Incidentally we learn that Saadiah's opinion of those data, which could not in any case be taken theoretically, was that they contain only the view of individuals but not the generally accepted view (fol. 7 b: ... כשעין באלו הענינים: fol. 7 b: זה האיש סעדיא הפיתומי אמר כי זה היה דת לקצת אנשים אך לא לכלל (האומה ודבריו גלויי הסתירה לפי הנראה ומכחיש האמת בידוע וכו'). He further attacks the theory of the great age of intercalation, which he refutes with arguments from the Talmud itself (fol. 15 b); and he also mentions his objection, that אביב can also signify the name of the month (fol. 16 d, where he calls Saadiah בנפשו (המהלל בנפשו). The other passages concern the problem of מוחרת השבת (fol. 53 a), the process of מליקה (fol. 89 d), the use of the fat tail (fol. 96 d: רואש החולקים: fol. 96 d: הוא סעדיא הפיתומי אשר עמר לחלוק כנגד דעת הקראים וחכמיו ע"ה rather thorough and complete), and the theory of the Levirate marriage (fol. 159 b: the name of Saadiah is not mentioned here, though he is the author of the view, introduced by ימען, and that Lev. xviii. 16 suffers limitation through Deut. xxv. 5, just as, e. g. Lev. xxiii. 3 through Num. xxviii. 9, see *supra*, vol. XVIII, p. 234).

All the views of Saadiah mentioned here are already known from earlier sources, from which Aaron also must have obtained them. On the other hand, the refutations often contain new points, especially with regard to the last matter, where logical categories are introduced. The manner of treatment is mostly pertinent and calm, as befits a serious scholar, though we have seen that the tone is not always distinguished.

In the commentary on the Pentateuch, כתר תורה (composed 1362; ed. Koslow, 1866-7), in which rabbinical authors are

very often mentioned¹, Saadiah, remarkably enough, is not quoted a single time, and just as little in the religio-philosophical work עין חיים (composed, 1346; ed. Leipzig, 1841; Koslow, 1847).

FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

40. **Samuel b. Moses al-Magribi**, a Karaite physician and author in Cairo, composed among other things a Book of Precepts in Arabic, entitled אלמרישר (finished July 2, 1434), which consists of twelve sections, and is extant in MS. in London, Berlin, and (partly) in St. Petersburg². It is distinguished by lucidity and orderly arrangement. The parts edited are: Section II, on Sabbath, ed. N. Weisz (Pressburg, 1907); Section III, on the calendar, ed. F. Kauffmann (Frankfurt a. M., 1903; see my critical notice, *J. Q. R.*, XVI, 405 seq.); Section IV, chap. i-xviii, on the fast- and feast-days, ed. Junowicz (Berlin, 1904; cf. *ibid.*, XVII, 594); Section VI, chap. i-xxii, on the laws contained in the section *Mishpâtîm*, ed. Gitelson (Berlin, 1904; cf. *ibid.*, XVIII, 560), and Section VII, on the dietary-

¹ They are as follows: David (al-Muqammas? I, f. 15 b); Ḥayyūj (I, 39 b, 45 b; II, 69 b); Abulwalid (I, 39 b, 64 a, 68 a, 69 a, 80 b; II, 4 b, 22 a, 49 a); Moses ibn Chiquitilla (II, 101 b); Rashi (I, 6 a; II, 93 a, 95 a); Abraham ibn Ezra (very often); Maimonides (I, 7 a, 25 b; III, 63 b); Nahmanides (I, 7 a); David Kimḥi (I, 45 b; II, 4 b; III, 16 b); Judah (b. Solomon ibn Matqā) of Toledo (I, 7 b, 8 a) and Shemariah Ikriti (I, 6 b).

² Cf. Steinschneider, § 199 (also my remarks in *Monatsschrift*, XLII, 189, and in my *Zur jüd.-arab. Litter.*, pp. 76, 77). According to Steinschneider, Samuel b. Moses [b. Jeshūa] al-Magribi [the physician, הרופא] was already identified or confused by the Karaites with Samuel (so read for Solomon) b. Moses b. Ḥesed El ibn al-סיני [the teacher, המלמד] (cf. especially Catalogue of Heb. MSS. in Berlin, II, no. 202), and hence a work entitled מקדמא is ascribed first to the one, then to the other. It is interesting to point out that in a Karaite prayer-book written by Daniel Feroz (MS. Brit. Mus. Or. 2531; Cat., II, no. 725) we read as follows (f. 90 b, cited in the *Catalogue*, p. 462 b): ויקום יקף אלוי ביקרא אדורש אלוי רהבד : הננבד ואסמחם אלמקדמא אך אלחכמים עי כל פרשה מן אול אלסנה לאזרחא והם מרי ורבי שמואל המלמד ושמואל הרופא. Thus both Samuels have composed such a work, and hence the confusion. Or, on the other hand, is this confusion reflected also in our notice? Cf. also *R. É. J.*, LI, 155.

laws, ed. Lorge (Berlin, 1907). No rabbinical author is mentioned in this work by name, but Saadiah is anonymously made the subject of controversy. Thus, in Section III, chap. 1 (ed. Kauffmann, p. 4*, l. 7), Saadiah's interpretation of Gen. i. 14, already mentioned a few times in this study, is characterized as that of a heretic (וקו' והיו לאותות הו ראנע) אלי אלמאורות אלמכור'ה לא [אלי] אליום ואללילה כמא ועם בעין אלמכאלפין; cf. also *J. Q. R.*, XVI, 406, *infra*).

41. **David b. Saadel [=Saadiah] ibn al-Hiti** (of Hit on the Euphrates) is the author of a register of Karaite scholars, among whom the Samuel al-Magribi just mentioned is the latest. It thus appeared probably about the middle of the fifteenth century, but in spite of his comparative youth and in spite of his lack of critical power, it is not altogether without value, as the author apparently often had at his disposal good older sources. We have also made use of it here rather frequently, not without profit. This register is edited, with an English translation, by G. Margoliouth (*J. Q. R.*, IX, 429-43, also separately; cf. my notice in *Z. f. H. B.*, II, 79), under the title "Ibn al-Hiti's Arabic Chronicle of Karaite Doctors." Saadiah is mentioned here a few times in conjunction with various Karaite authors (see p. 432, l. 19; p. 433, l. 11; p. 435, ll. 8, 10, 19), but the only thing of interest is the statement that Salmon b. Jeroham died in Aleppo, that Saadiah followed the bier in rent garments and barefooted, and that, when he was reproached about it, he is said to have replied: "We have both derived great profit from our mutual controversy. There is not the slightest doubt about his [Salmon's] knowledge; and hence I did what I did" (p. 434, l. 20 seq.). Probably Ibn al-Hiti did not invent this fable, but took it from an older Karaite author.—Cf. also Steinschneider, *Arab. Liter. d. Juden*, § 200, and *infra*, No. 49.

42. **Elias b. Moses Bashiatchi**, who is distinguished "by conspicuous knowledge of the older literature, by complete mastery over the rich material, and who presents

the clearest and plainest method among the Karaite codifiers¹," died in Constantinople, 23 Sivan, 1490, without completing his Book of Precepts אדרת אליו (ed. Constantinople, 1531; Koslow, 1835; Odessa, 1870)². In this work, which attained predominant authority among the later Karaites, Bashiatchi records the older opinions and hence mentions also the opinions of Saadiah. In the introduction, for example, he disputes Saadiah's explanation of Exod. xxiv. 12 (ובזה הפסוק נדחקו קצת מבעלי הקבלה עד שהגאון) . . . הפיתומי אמר כי מה שאמר כתבתי דבק עם לוחות האבן לא עם התורה והמצוה כי השם יתעלה לא כתב רק עשרת הדברים ופירש התורה תורה שכתב והמצוה תורה שבעל פה . . . והתשובה עליו מה שאמר כתבתי דבק עם לוחות האבן לא עם התורה והמצוה זה צריך אהוב שיאמין בו³ (כי כתבתי הוא אחר התורה והמצוה והיה ראוי שיחיה קודם מהם וכו'). Then he discusses the themes touched on most often in the controversy with Saadiah, viz. the questions of calendar-lore (ענין קדוש החדש, chap. 6, 9, 15, and 36), fire-burning on the Sabbath (ע' שבת, chap. 4, 18), and the forbidden pieces of fat (ע' שחיטה, chap. 18). Moreover, he also controverts Saadiah without mentioning his name, e. g. in reference to ממחרת השבת (ע' חג השבועות, chap. 3), &c. In all these questions Bashiatchi follows earlier protagonists, especially Aaron b. Elias, but by his clear and systematic classification of the material he throws a brighter light upon many a matter that had till then received scant consideration.

43. **Kaleb b. Elias Afendopolo** (or **Efendopulo**). He was a pupil and brother-in-law of the preceding. He is justly called the last Karaite polyhistor, for he represents

¹ Frankl in his article "Karaiten" (in *Ersch u. Gruber*, II, vol. XXXIII, p. 21).

² The work was then completed by Kaleb b. Elias Afendopolo, the well-known pupil and brother-in-law of Bashiatchi; but he was also overtaken by death before he was able to bring his work to a complete conclusion. Cf. the following number.

³ This explanation of Saadiah is already controverted by Tobias b. Moses, who, however, does not quote it fully: see *J. Q. R.*, XIX, 79. Cf. also Wolf, *Bibl. Hebr.*, IV, 1093.

in his own personality the entire learning of his age¹. Among his numerous writings, which deal with the most diverse scientific subjects, there is also an incomplete supplement to the *אדרת אליהו*, which has just been mentioned. This work mentions the date, 1497, in several places. In the supplement to *ענין טומאה וטהרה* (ed. Odessa, 136 c, at foot), he discusses the commandment of the red heifer, the ashes of which possessed the well-known property of defiling the pure and cleansing the unclean. He quotes Saadiah's view², but he is as little satisfied with it as with the exegesis of the other Rabbanite and Karaite authorities, whom he quotes previously.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

44. Moses b. Elias Bashiatchi, a great-grandson of Elias b. Moses Bashiatchi (no. 42 above), is generally represented as a prodigy. Born in 1554, at Constantinople, he is said by his sixteenth year to have already acquired many languages (Greek, Arabic, Spanish) and to have composed many works. He then started on his travels, but died two years after, 26 Iyar, 1572, as a young man of eighteen (Mordecai b. Nisan, *רר מרדכי*, ed. Vienna, fol. 9 b). How much of this is true it is hard to ascertain³; but it is a fact that he understood Arabic, and that he had before him many

¹ For the literature about him, see my forthcoming article in the *Hebrew Encyclopedia*, *אוצר ישראל*, vol. II, pp. 172-4, s.v. אפנרפולי, where I have endeavoured to determine the time when he lived.

² ואמר רב סעדיה הגאון שהפירה דומה לרובש שמויק לבעל המרה האדומה ויעל לבעל : הליחה גם דומה לשמש שכלבן הרבר המכונס ומשחיר פני הכוס: It appears from the examples quoted here, which do not agree with those given in *Emunoth* (section iii, end), that Afendopolo must presumably have used an intermediary source—i. e. ibn Ezra on Numbers xix. 2. It must, however, be remarked that the first instance only is adduced there.

³ Much more probable is another statement contained in the St. Petersburg MS. of his *מטה אליהו* (in Neubauer, *Aus d. Petersb. Bibl.*, p. 121), that Moses B. died in 1555, at the age of twenty-eight. Cf. also Steinschneider, *Die Geschichtsliteratur der Juden*, I, p. 106, no. 124, and *J. Q. R.*, XVIII, 188.

monuments of the oldest Karaite literature. In Egypt he found fragments of 'Anân's Book of Precepts in the original Aramaic, which he included in his *זבח פסח* (cf. *R. É. J.*, XLV, 176 seq.). The Pentateuch commentary of Abu-l-Faraj Harûn was also known to him (see *ibid.*, XXXIII, 217; reprint, p. 38), &c. In his *מטה אלהים* he gives a chain of tradition of the Karaite teachers (reproduced by Mordecai b. Nisan, l. c., fol. 11 b). Here we read, among other things, that Saadiah flourished at the time of Salmon b. Jeroḥam, Joseph b. Noah, Jacob b. Isaac Qirqisâni, Ḥasan b. Mashiah, and Abraham b. Isaac al-Baṣri; that he was a disciple of Salmon; and that Joseph disputed with him in his *ספר המאור*, composed in 930 . . . והם העתיקה לרב נח והוא העתיק לרב שלמה בן ירוחם ולרב יוסף בן נח ולרב יעקב בן יצחק הקרקסאני ולרב חסור [sic /] בן משיח ולרב אברהם בן יצחק הבוצרי ובזמניהם היה רב סעדיה גאון ז"ל הפיתומי והוא היה תלמידו של רב שלמון בן ירוחם ורב יוסף השיגו ונמצאו יחד שניהם בזמן אחד והקשה עליו ר' יוסף והכריח לו בטענותיו כאשר מזכיר (בספרו בספר המאור וחבר בשנת ארבעת אלפים שש מאות וצ' ליצירה). Here we have, so far as is known, the oldest source for the information, often repeated by later Karaites, that Saadiah was a pupil of Salmon¹, and this information caused Firkowitsch to fabricate the *Muqaddima* named after Salmon (Pinsker, p. 61 seq.). By the Joseph who disputed with Saadiah we have likewise to understand Qirqisâni, whom Moses Bashiatchi mostly calls רבי' יוסף הקרקסאני, but whom he also styles once as Joseph b. Isaac b. Jacob Q. and another time as Joseph b. Jacob Q. Hence we should probably read in the chain of tradition: ולרב [יוסף בן] יעקב בן יצחק הקרקסאני. He always entitles his work as *המאור הגדול*, and only once as *ספר האורים*, so that here also *המאור* is to be given the full form of *המאור הגדול*².

¹ Another of the recent writers on the Talmud (Bernfeld, *Der Talmud*, Berlin, 1900, p. 83) asserts that this is a fact, and that it is admitted by both sides, Karaite and Rabbinical!

² Cf. the passages in question from the works of B. in *Steinschneider-Festschrift*, pp. 214 seq., where I also point out that Qirqisâni was

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

45. **Elias b. Baruch Jerushalmi** belongs to the second half of the seventeenth century. We find him in Elul, 1654, in Constantinople, where he hospitably entertained the Karaite travellers from the Crimea, Moses Jerushalmi b. Elias ha-Levi and Elias b. David, in his house¹. But he must have migrated later to the Crimea, for Simḥa Isaac Lutzki mentions him among the scholars of this country (ארח צריקים, fol. 21 b, l. 3 from bottom). Elias composed certain works (enumerated by Fürst, III, 67), which, however, mostly appear to have become lost. He was also a scribe and particularly copied old polemical works of the Karaites, which he provided with prefatory remarks and postscripts, e.g. the polemical treatise of Sahl b. Maṣliaḥ against Jacob b. Samuel (Pinsker, pp. 25, 27, 43). In a concluding note on a copy of Salmon b. Jeroḥam's controversial work, which has been preserved from Pinsker's literary remains in the Vienna *Beth ha-Midrash* (No. 27³; cf. Pinsker, p. 35), Elias indulges in such violent abuse of Saadiah that the pen refuses to repeat the words². We there read that many Karaites engaged in a polemical campaign against the godless Fayyumite, e.g. David b. Boaz (מר דוד הנשיא בן בעוז) (הוכאי הנשיא ע"ה)³, "his teacher" Salmon b. Jeroḥam (סלמן)

confused with al-Baṣir (but perhaps this confusion originates with the copyists; cf. also the following number). The designation of Qirgisāni's כהנא אלמנאר as כהנא המאר הגרול ought to serve as a sufficient distinction from Baṣir's כהנא אלמנבאר (= ספר המאר).

¹ See the account of the travels of this Moses, ed. Gurland (גנוי ישראל), part I, p. 31: "... וביום ה' [י"א אלול התי"ר] באנו לקוסמינא והנינו בליל יום ששי: בבית כה"ר אליהו ירושלמי יצ"ו בכ"ר ברוך ירושלמי יצ"ו ואכלנו ושתינו משלחנו עמהם. ממה שומן הקב"ה. Cf. also Neubauer, *Aus d. Petersb. Bibl.*, pp. 47, 67.—The surname Jerushalmi, which both Elias and his father Baruch bear, and which is also to be met with among other Karaites of the later time, does not signify absolutely that its bearers came from Jerusalem, but that they had made a pilgrimage to the holy city (hence analogous to the Moslem Ḥajji) or had sojourned there some time.

² Published by Bardach, סוכר לבני רשף (Vienna, 1869), p. 27.

³ Elias has here a hovering notion of the name of the Exilarch David b. Zakkai, the opponent of Saadiah.

בן ירוחם רבו המשיב לו תשובות כהלכה ומוכיחו על פניו על חלומותיו (ועל דבריו), and his colleague, Joseph al-Basir, also a disciple of Salmon, in his work *ha-Maor*, composed in the year 910 (ונם חברו של פיומי רבנו יוסף הרואה תלמידו של רבינו סלמון רבו) (בספרו המאור המחובר בשנת ד"א שש"ע). The ban which Salmon, according to right and custom, hurled against his rebellious pupil, provoked Saadiah to such a degree of agitation and fear that he fell into a melancholy, died of it in 942, and was denied an honourable burial in Sura. Elias seems to have taken these various chronological snippets partly from Moses Bashiatchi¹.

46. **Mordecai b. Nisan** composed among other things, as is well known, in the form of an answer to the questions of Trigland, the little work *דר מררכי*, which pretends to be a history of Karaism. He finished it July 18, 1699, in Krasni Ostrow, not far from Lemberg, and it first appeared in Wolf's *Notitia Karaeorum*, Hamburg, 1714. Saadiah is mentioned here only quite incidentally, e.g. in the above-mentioned chain of tradition of Moses Bashiatchi reproduced here. In another passage (ed. Vienna, fol. 13 a) Mordecai states that the Karaite chronology agrees with that of the Rabbanites. For example, of the latter, Gedaliah ibn Yahya, in his *Shalsholet*, gives 942 as the year of Saadiah's death (... וכמו כן כשנעין במספר תאריכיהם) שזכרו את רבי סעדיה גאון שלהם שכתב בערו רבי גדליה אבן יחייא (בשלשלת הקבלה שרבי סעדיה גאון נפטר בשנת ד' אלפים תש"ב ליצירה), and this agrees (?) with the assertion of the Karaites just mentioned, that Saadiah was a pupil of Salmon, and that he is the object of a polemical attack in the *Sefer ha-Maor*, composed in 930. In conclusion, he speaks (fol. 13 b) of the letter of Menahem, mentioned by Trigland, to עקילם הניר (ed. Pinsker, p. 55 seq.; see *supra*, No. 4), and doubts whether this Saadiah is identical with the Gaon. He does not evince a trace of hatred against the Fayyumite.

¹ So for instance on the polemics against Saadiah in ספר המאור, only that he independently added after רב יוסף the word הרואה.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

47. **Abraham b. Josiah Jerushalmi** is included among the scholars of the Crimea by Simḥa Isaac Lutzki (אברהם ציריקים, fol. 21 b, l. 2 from bottom), and lived in Tschufut-Kalé, as he also bears the surname קלעי (ibid., fol. 26 a, s. v. שאל שאל). He is the author of a work entitled *אמונה אמן* (ed. Koslow, 1846), which is uncommonly interesting in many respects. In the first place the author manifests an unexampled extensive knowledge of the Rabbinical literature, extending not only to the halakhic but also to the theological and other branches, and he speaks of this and also of the Talmudical literature with an esteem that could hardly be surpassed by a Rabbanite. He especially reveres Maimonides, whose works he has studied with diligence¹. Abraham composed this work whilst he was still young and lived a wandering life, and he finished it, according to the postscript, in the year 1712². The greatest part (ff. 4 b-44 b) is devoted to the demonstration whether the Karaite or the Rabbanite law is the true one, and here also he discusses the matter with the Rabbanites in the calmest tone and only occasionally uses a rather violent expression. For example, in the only passage in which Saadiah is mentioned (fol. 33 b), it is said that the Rabbanites in their controversy with the Karaites adopt as their support either the plain meaning of scripture (פשט) or tradition (קבלה). But they could not succeed with the *Peshat*, as this is against them. Thus Saadiah maintained that the Jewish religion does not teach the observation of the moon but the calculation of the calendar, and that this is based upon scripture itself. But this is wrong, as Maimonides in his commentary on the Mishna and Ibn Ezra, besides others, admits³. Similarly, his opinion that

¹ I hope to analyse this work shortly in a special notice.

² F. 49 b: ועוד כי חברתי ואני נער גולה ונודד ממקומי . . . ועוד חסרני . . . מהפירושים וספרי הנמרות . . . וזכני להשלים מחברת זה הספר עצות מרחוק אמונה אמן ביום שני לשבוע בסדר ואת העם צו לאמר בשנת התע"ב ליצירה וכו'.

³ . . . בראשונה רב סעדיה גאון שהשיב ואמר כי לפי פשטי הכתובים אין דת ישראל בנויה . . .

the fat tail (אליה) is not designated in scripture as fat is altogether wrong, and Ibn Ezra admitted here also that the Gaon was mistaken. Nay, even Alfasi expressly states in his *Halukhot* (*Hullin*, section VII), that the fat tail is indeed called fat, but that the Bible nevertheless permitted its enjoyment¹. In fact, all Saadiah's objections against the Karaites were void and vain (כל תשובות) (שהשיב לבעלי מקרא הם בניויות על קו תהו ואבני בהו), and even the greatest Rabbanite scholar could not offer any real reply, as what was false could not possibly be given out as truth (ולא הנאון סעדיה בלבד שלא יוכל להשיב תשובות אמתיות לבעלי מקרא) אלא אפילו הגדול שבהם לא יוכל בזה כי אין בעולם מי שיאמת השקר כי (לנמנע טבע קיים והמשכיל יבין). By the "greatest" scholar he doubtless means Maimonides, whom, as already mentioned, he places in the highest rank of Rabbinical learning.

על פי הראיה אלא על פי החשבון כמו שנהגים היום ואין ספק כי זה שקר גמור וכבר העיר לשקרות זה הרב הגדול רבי' משה בר מיימון זצ"ל בפירושו במשנה וז"ל ואני המיה מאדם יכחיש הראות ויאמר כי דת היהודים איננה בנויה על ראיה הלכנה אלא על פי החשבון בלבד. . . . וכן הראב"ע ז"ל אמר ובמשנה ראיות כאריות שנפל הפסח בבר"ו וכו' What is meant here is the passage in Maimonides' *Comm. on Rosh ha-Shana*, II, 6, and in Ibn Ezra on Lev. xxiii. 3 (but the latter passage is indirectly taken from Aaron b. Elias).

. . . וכבר ידוע שאפילו רבוהיו מודים שהאליה תקרא חלב כמו שכתוב בהלכות רב אלפס¹ בפרק גיר הנשה ז"ל ואליה גופא אף על גב דמקריא חלב רחמנא שריא דכתיב כל חלב שור וכשב ועז לא תאכלו דבר השוה בשור וכשב ועז הוא דאסור ואליה הואיל ואינה שוה בשור וכשב ועז דבכבש היא דקרבה ובשור ועז לא קרבה [שריא] ע"כ. But Abraham b. Josiah, who, according to his own statement, had no copy of the Talmud before him when composing his work (see above, p. 226, n. 2), was unable to know that Alfasi here simply paraphrases a Talmudical passage, see *Hullin*, 117 a (cf. *Keritot*, 4 a): א"ל רב מיר לרב זביר אי אליה איקראי חלב: (cf. *Hullin*, 117 a (cf. *Keritot*, 4 a): א"ל רב מיר לרב זביר אי אליה איקראי חלב: רב אשי אמר חלבו האליה איקראי חלב סתמא לא איקראי וכו' Incidentally be it remarked that this Talmudical passage, in which only late Amoraim appear, and which in *Hullin* gives quite the impression of an editorial addition, was perhaps also intended to weaken the objections of many people to the permitted enjoyment of the fat tail. Thus the Karaites would in this case have only had to attach themselves to a pioneer opposition of earlier times.

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

48. **Joseph Solomon b. Moses** (called היש"ר), Haham in Koslow in the first half of the nineteenth century (born 1769, died December 10, 1844; for his epitaph see Firkowitsch, *אבני זכרון*, pp. 241-2), composed a very thorough supercommentary on the *Mibhar*, entitled *מירת כסף* (completed 17 Ab, 1825), which was published together with the *Mibhar* in Koslow, 1835¹. Here Joseph Solomon remarks, on Lev. iii. 9 (fol. 5 b, n. 136 seq.), that the arguments adduced by Aaron b. Joseph, that the fat tail is not comprised under חלב, are those of Saadiah: [וטעו המתירים אותה לאכילה] עד שקצתם הוסיפו וי"ו [ואמרו חלבו והאלה] זה ר' סעדיה נאון שפירש והאלה בתוספת וי"ו כדי שלא תוכלל בתוך פרטי החלבים הנזכרים אחריה . . . עוד טען הפיתומי כי אע"פ שיהיה חלבו שם כלל הוא כולל הה' חלבים הנזכרים אחר אמרו האלה אבל האלה אינה נכללת במלת חלבו וכו'. He naturally obtained this information from Aaron b. Elias (*Gan Eden*, fol. 96) or Elias Bashiatchi (*Adderet*, ענין שחיטה, cap. 18).

49. **Abraham b. Samuel Firkowitsch** (born at Lutzk 21 Elul, 1788, died at Tschufut-Kalé 22 Sivan, 1874), a brother-in-law and pupil of the preceding, is at the same time the last noted Karaite scholar². His epoch-making importance, which was the cause of much blessing as well as of much harm, is too well known that we should dilate upon it here. We shall therefore, in accordance with our object, merely examine his relations with Saadiah.

Firkowitsch began his literary career with abusive writings directed against Rabbanite Judaism. One of them (חזרת תכנית) he added as an appendix to the *מבחר ישרים*

¹ See on him and his work also Jost, II, 374; Gottlob, p. 179, and Fürst, III, 131 seq.

² The day and year of his birth are given by Firkowitsch himself in *הכרמל*, II (1861, 1862), 169. The literature on him in *Jew. Encycl.*, s. v. (V, 394), is not complete. Cf., e. g., Geiger, *Jüd. Zeitschrift*, XI, 142 seq.; Frankl, *Monatsschrift*, XXV, 479; Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über d. Kunde hebr. Handschriften*, p. 82, &c.

(Koslow, 1835) edited by him (fol. 49-58)¹. The other (מסה ומריבה) appeared as an independent work (ibid., 1838). In outward form the author here follows the example of Hadassi, inasmuch as he takes the Ten Commandments as his text, and writes in rhymed prose, although the style is somewhat more fluent and pleasant than that of his predecessor. But in regard to matter also, he follows throughout those of the older Karaite authors who are lacking in every feeling of respect for their opponent. In this work Saadiah is occasionally made the object of a polemical attack, and is mentioned by name. The author also repeats the statement that the Gaon was a pupil of Salmon, and that in his religio-philosophical work he followed the footsteps of his teacher (fol. 134 b: ונח ראה [ר"ל הרמב"ם] ספרי קדמונינו ולמד מהמה כספר רבנו סלמון (sic) מאד מחברת נעמה שהיה רבו של סעדיה גאון משנאנו: בכן דרך בספר אמונות שלו בדרך רבו סלמון בן ירוחם אין לחכמתו ערך משלמות הפעולה שלמות (הפועל נוכח), nay, that he had learnt the philosophy of the Kalâm, upon which this work is built, from the Karaites, just as Maimonides himself admits that this philosophy first appeared among them (fol. 135 a: ... בן הודה [ר"ל הרמב"ם] שאצל הקראים נמצאה חכמה [חכמת. 1.] הדברים בשם פילוסופיא ונקראה וסעדיה החל באמונות אשר למד אצלמו; see *Moreh*, I, 71). In fact, all important Rabbanite scholars who, in accordance with the precept of 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, strove after a true knowledge, like Saadiah, Maimonides, and others, only followed the example of the Karaites, who first made this knowledge a duty (fol. 137 a: ... הראשונים בדבר זה החקירה: fol. 137 a: חייבו היו הקראים ... וחלו עצמם על פסוק דע את אלהי אביך ... ואחריהם כל ישרי לב רבנים נמשכו גדולי חכמיהם בדרכי קראים הלכו סעדיה (ורמב"ם וכל הנלויים האמת קבלו וכו'). In the controversy about single points of difference among Rabbanites and Karaites,

¹ Also in the supplement to Aaron b. Joseph's Isaiah commentary (from cap. lix), entitled קצור הכלית ישעיה, he continually disputes with the Rabbanites in a very abusive tone; see, e. g., on lix. 5; lx. 22; lxii. 11; lxv. 4, 7, 8, 11, &c. Cf. also Geiger, l. c., 147.

Saadia is mentioned only in the discussion about the burning of fire on the Sabbath (fol. 51a: נם פיתומי בהפכו (תבערו לתבעירו לא הריח כי שתיח להדלקה נאמרו וכו'.

But in proportion as Firkowitsch began to make his discoveries, his relation towards Rabbinism changed. Whether it was that in consequence of his scientific ardour his ideas had become enlarged¹, whether it was that he now needed the good will of the Rabbanite scholars², the fact is that from 1839 he no longer indulged in any objectionable remarks in his published works against the Rabbanites, and that he gave expression to this altered disposition in his famous letter to Bezalel Stern in the year 1841 (published in part in *אוצר נחמד*, I, 105). Now Saadia also receives honour from his hands, especially in a treatise in which he communicates the discovery of fragments of two works of Saadia, the *ספר האגרון* and the *ספר הגלוי* (in *המליץ*, VIII, 1868, no. 26-7; partly quoted by Harkavy, *Stud. u. Mitt.*, V, 12 seq., 135 seq.). He rejoices exceedingly at the discovery of his "great and wonderful work," the *ספר האגרון*, because here Saadia, "our holy teacher," gave a positive date (ומי יוכל לחזות ולהופיע את גודל השעשוע) אשר אני משתעשע בתאריך חבורו שהיה נעלם עד היום מכל חכמי לב (אשר כתב רבנו הקדוש הזה בידו הקדושה במלות ברורות וכו'). All the Gaon's opponents were worthless fellows who invented godless libels against him (כל המענות אשר טענו על דבריו . . . ר' דוד בן זכאי וכלף בן שרגאדו בעלילות רשע את אישים (פועלי און הקושרים עליו). He regretted himself that he was once one of the foes of the Gaon (של הראב"ד [על פטירת הגאון מן המרה השחורה . . . לא העלוא על ספריהם רק קצת המאמינים לקבלתו או השונאים את הרס"ג מבני מקרא (כמוני, לפני זה הביאוו בספריהם . . . ועל חטאתי אבקש מכבוד מעלתו מחילה בעולם (הבא). Firkowitsch also admits here that Saadia was older than Salmon, and hence that the statement of Ibn al-Hiti

¹ So Geiger, l. c., 149.

² So Harkavy, *Altjüd. Denkmäler*, pp. 211 seq., whose judgment, however, is somewhat too one-sided.

(see *supra*, No. 41) caused difficulties (וואלי יש שרש דבר) . . . בדברי בן אלהיית שהיה הרס"ג בארם צובה בזמן פטירת הרסב"י והתאבל עליו אך לא אוכל לדעת איך אפשר להיות אחרי שהרסב"י חבר פי' תהלים בשנת תתפ"ו להרבנ ד"א תשי"ו והרס"ג נפטר בשנת ד"א תש"ב לפי המוסכם 'וכו' (כהנ"ל וכו')¹, and so forth in the same tone. In another work, where he likewise has the opportunity of mentioning Saadiah (בני רשף, Vienna, 1871, p. 8 seq.), he does this quite objectively.

With Firkowitsch the fountains of Karaite learning dry up completely, for the extremely little that has flowed from a Karaite pen during the last thirty years is hardly worthy of mention; and so with him there closes the polemical campaign against Saadiah. But it is worth while now calling particular attention to a phenomenon. In this essay we have passed in review almost a full thousand years, and we have seen that we cannot speak of any development whatever in this controversy. The number of the controversialists is indeed not very great, but still it forms a distinguished host. The points in the dispute, however, are almost always the same, and we seldom meet any new factors or new points of view. The tone mostly depends not on internal but on external factors: it is calm or violent according to the temperament of each disputant. But throughout the course of centuries the argument proceeds along the same track. Our dissertation, therefore, is of interest not only as a bibliographical document but also as a chapter in the history of culture.

SAMUEL POZNAŃSKI.

¹ Harkavy, *Stud. u. Mitt.*, V, 136, n. 2, did not yet know who is meant by this Ibn al-Hiti.